NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS

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STACKS

REGIONAL NOTES

SHERWOOD ISLAND STATE PARK, CONN.: State authorities plan to dredge gravel from Long Island Sound and stockpile it on an area of tidal marsh in the park. The gravel would then be used in construction of the Connecticut Turnpike. The portion of the 100-acre marsh to be destroyed would later be developed for parking and intensive recreational use. Opposition to despoilation of the marsh and indiscriminate dredging of the Sound is being headed up by Connecticut Conservationists, an association of conservation groups including the Nature Conservancy.

BATTLE CREEK CYPRESS SWAMP, MD.: Options for the purchase of two tracts comprising the 100-acre Battle Creek Cypress Swamp have been acquired by the Nature Conservancy through its Battle Creek Cypress Preservation Committee. The Battle Creek Swamp is in Calvert County, Maryland, about 45 miles southeast of Washington, D.C. and slightly farther from Baltimore. It is one of the few remaining cypress forests in Maryland. While not a strictly primeval stand, it does consist of a fine growth of vigorous trees, the largest of which is 5 feet in diameter. The options run for a period of one year and during that time a total of $10,000 must be raised to pay for the land and the necessary fencing and facilities. Gifts and pledges received thus far total about $1,100.

The Battle Creek Swamp is believed to have great potentiality as a preserve because it is so readily accessible to the populations of the District of Columbia and Baltimore and to the many tourists who come to Washington. A paved road crossing the swamp facilitates viewing of the cypress trees.

Another tract, also in Calvert County, is in the process of being set aside as a preserve by the Nature Conservancy. This 20-acre area has an unusual growth of hemlock, along with other upland and swamp vegetation. Hemlock is not normally found in the coastal area, but old colonial records show that this species was growing here from the earliest days.

Mr. G. Flippo Gravatt, Maryland representative of the Nature Conservancy, and Mr. Romeo Mansueti, chairman of the local committee, are leaders in the projects.

MIANUS GORGE PRESERVE, NEW YORK: Several new tracts have been added to the Mianus River Gorge Preserve, bringing the area now owned or under purchase contracts to a total of about 145 acres. A drive for funds to meet current obligations of the land purchase program is now underway by the Nature Conservancy's Mianus Gorge Committee.

MORTON REFUGE, NEW YORK: The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has announced the addition of a third tract of land to the Elizabeth Alexandra Morton National Wildlife Refuge, bringing the area to 182 acres.

This refuge, located on Jessup's Point, Long Island, has been created by the gifts of Mrs. Elizabeth Morton Tilton. "These contributions," an official of the Department of the Interior has said, "are particularly valuable because they are located in a section of the country where expanding human pressures are rapidly despoiling homes for our flora and fauna. It is our sincere hope that after seeing the wonderful example set by Mrs. Tilton in donating these lands for the conservation of wildlife, others will also help in similar ways."

WICHITA REFUGE, OKLA.: The annexation of 10,700 acres of the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge by Fort Sill continues to be a goal of Army authorities. Hearings on H.R. 9665, the bill sponsored by the Army, were conducted on May 23 and 24, by the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries but completion of the hearings has been postponed and as yet no action has been taken on the bill. A companion measure, S. 3360, has been introduced in the Senate. Conservation groups and the Department of the Interior are united in opposition to the Army proposal.

TANNERSVILLE BOG, PENNSYLVANIA: Formation of the local committee for the Tannersville Bog project has been completed. Over a fourth of the $2,000 goal for the campaign is now available. The balance must be raised by the end of the year. Contributions may be sent to the central office of the Nature Conservancy or to Walter H. Sebring, 38 North Seventh Street, Stroudsburg, Pa.

WOODBOURNE FOREST AND WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, PENNSYLVANIA: Establishment of the Woodbourne Forest and Wildlife Sanctuary under the Nature Conservancy became a reality on April 10. The 480-acre sanctuary lying just north of Dimock in Susquehanna County, Penn-

sylvania, is a gift from Mr. Francis R. Cope, Jr. and his family. It includes a fine virgin hemlock-hardwood stand along with a variety of other types ranging from open meadow to old-growth forest. There is a small stream and swamp. The wide variety of habitats has led to an unusually large number of kinds of plants and animals being present. There have been 91 herbaceous and 62 woody plant species recorded, as well as 53 kinds of breeding birds, 8 kinds of fish, and 29 other vertebrates.

A local management committee is to be appointed this summer. A residence is included with the sanctuary and it is anticipated that a custodian can be retained in exchange for use of the house.

UTAH NATURAL AREA ACTIVITIES: Formal organization of persons interested in the preservation of natural areas in Utah was effected on May 12. The new group is affiliated with the Utah Academy of Science, Arts and Letters.

SEASHORE STATE PARK, VA.: Seashore State Park, said to be one of the finest natural areas on the Atlantic Coast, may be in jeopardy as an indirect result of court decisions on the racial segregation issue. Since it cannot be operated on a segregated basis, the park has been closed to the public and some state officials have voiced the opinion that it should be sold in order to liquidate the state's investment, particularly in recreational facilities. The principal concern in the segregation issue is the developed beach area rather than the natural portion of the park. Vigorous protests by organizations interested in preservation of the park are believed by some to have forestalled a sale by the state at the present time.

INFORMATION BULLETINS

Several new information bulletins and special publications have been issued in recent months. These are available on request.

"Living Museums of Natural History" A reprint of an article by Richard H. Pough, president of the Nature Conservancy.

"$80,000 for Conservation" A case history of the campaign for establishment of the Wisconsin Audubon Camp. Info. Bul. No. 18.

"Natural Areas for Schools" An edited transcript of a meeting on this subject held by the Massachusetts Nature Conservancy. Info. Bul. No. 19

"The Forest is a Classroom" and "Come with us to Cedar Creek Forest" Two articles giving a case history of a scientific area established under the joint auspices of the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Academy of Science. Info. Bul. 20.

"Wildflower Laws" A tabular compilation of state laws pertaining to wildflower protection. Info. Bul. No. 21.

"The Natural Area Situation, 1956" A special state by state review of developments in the natural area preservation field. Info. Bul. No. 22.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Nature Conservancy will be held at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, on the afternoon of August 29. A complete revision of the by-laws has been prepared and approved by the Board of Governors and will be presented for approval of the membership at the meeting. Full information on the meeting time, place, and program, along with the draft of the new by-laws will be sent to all members in the near future.

GRANTS

The Nature Conservancy's "Population - Conservation" scholarship of $500 for the 1956-57 school year has been awarded to William C. Yeomans, a graduate student in landscape architecture at the University of California. Mr. Yeomans' particular field of study is incompatible uses of park and recreation areas.

A special grant of $300 has been made to William E. Martin, a graduate student of plant ecology at Rutgers University, to help finance his ecological studies of Island Beach State Park in New Jersey.

Both of these grants have been made possible through the generosity of Dr. Conrad Chapman of Boston.

ANTIQUITIES ACT

June 8 was the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities, more commonly known as the Antiquities Act of 1906. This is the law which provided for the establishment of national monuments by presidential proclamation and thus made possible many of the areas in the national park system. Under the Act, "historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States" may be designated as national monuments, and, as a part thereof, the necessary parcels of land may be reserved.

The Antiquities Act also provided for the general protection of historic and prehistoric ruins and monuments, and objects of antiquity, situated on Federal lands.

EXOTICS COMMITTEE REPORT

by H. W. Levi, Chairman

The Nature Conservancy is concerned with setting areas aside --areas which are to stay in natural conditions. Although we may be successful in establishing nature reserves, the continued introduction of exotic animals and plants into the wilds of this country may jeopardize these areas, since these animals and plants do not necessarily stay in the place where they are planted.

The publicity given to the European rabbit last year, when it was liberated into several states, showed the weakness of present laws and regulations, as well as the lack of biological knowledge on the part of the hunters who hoped to obtain an additional game animal. Although a well known pest in other countries where introduced, such as England, Australia, New Zealand and Tierra del Fuego, the Fish and Wildlife Service could not stop interstate shipment of animals whose importation is illegal.

A number of exotic ungulates are bred and distributed to private ranches in many parts of the Southwest and Mexico for private and commercialized hunting. Legally, these animals are probably considered livestock. Black buck from India and Asian axis deer, Sika deer, white fallow deer, are hardy animals and widespread, and they are not likely to remain in confinement, particularly axis deer which jumps fences. Once wild, it is doubtful that hunters would want to exterminate them. Barbary sheep have been liberated by the game departments of two southwestern states; one of them just had an open season. Fallow deer have taken hold in Kentucky and Nebraska. Other deer are probably being tried out by individuals, although we seldom hear about it since it is done by fanciers and hobbyists. Once the animals become established, public reaction might decide policy; however many people favor new game animals, and are not aware of the hazards involved.

Although we may hear more about mammal and bird introductions, fish, invertebrates and plants are probably introduced on a larger scale than ever before. Many of these that come to attention are official releases done by some state or federal departments. A Pacific state is releasing European gray partridge. A Rocky Mountain state is stocking eastern wild turkeys (although Merriam turkeys, a sub-species, are found in another part of that state). A midwestern state is stocking a Japanese quail. Southern European coturnix quail, which are believed to prefer a thinner habitat than the bobwhite, are also being released in a midwestern state. Francolins and various southern European birds are shipped to western states as a Fish and Wildlife Service project; various kinds of fish native to the eastern states are planted in lakes and reservoirs of the west. There are several groups that try to stock game animals in Hawaii. Mouflon, or Mediterranean sheep, were planted on Lanai Islands, in 1954, and Florida bobwhite quail, and chukar were planted on several islands.

Some state and federal wildlife agencies have been seduced by the appeal of "desirable" introductions, and others are subject to the pressures of an overenthusiastic public. We cannot seek legislation at the present time since there is little common knowledge of the dangers involved. Many hunters favor almost any game introduction, and pressure is put on state fish and game departments to obtain exotics.

What we need most might be a thorough, impartial study that would provide solid, non-controversial basis for deciding on the question. It should tell us what exotic game animals are now on game farms and ranches in this country and how they are distributed. It should evaluate the species that are now being bred here. It should suggest lines of thought and possible legal measures. Inevitably it would have to review biological dangers of introduction, but it should be basically impartial so that it would not be dismissed as biased. Fair attention should be given to successful introductions of the past and to current or future ones that seem well calculated. Once a study is under way it might find a surprising amount of support that is now latent and unorganized. Would one of our Foundations interested in conservation take up the task?

WANTED: More Open Space in Growing Areas

By JOHN BREWER MOORE
Assistant Town Planner, Montclair, N. J.

Reprinted from THE AMERICAN CITY
January 1956

TWO characteristics of the nation's rapid metropolitan growth have raised alarms in the minds of many people. One of these is the immense and growing sprawl of urban uses that stretch for mile on mile without a sufficient amount of open green area to afford contrast and to preserve something of the previous rural character.

The second characteristic is the loss of valuable, and in many cases irreplaceable, agricultural land, as urban uses spread outward from burgeoning city areas. California and New Jersey are two states where the statement, "My land is becoming too valuable to farm," expresses the economic difficulty that farming interests face in fringe counties which are undergoing suburbanization.

These two problems suggest the need for a new concept of providing open spaces in our metropolitan areas. For, in the future, if the public demands both a better protection of agricultural lands and a check on endless urban sprawl, our present policies for obtaining and maintaining parks and other public green areas will be inadequate. Outright public acquisition of land cannot be expected to occur on a scale large enough to satisfactorily preserve agriculture, and it will not be effective in arresting the problem of urban sprawl. Nor can zoning be expected to achieve the required goals, because (a) we cannot deny agricultural interests relief in the face of our tremendous suburban development, (b) there exists little if any coordination between our taxing and zoning policies, and (c) the theory of green areas predicates a special public interest in certain tracts of land above and beyond the usual public interest in any tract of land under zoning restriction. Therefore a new green area concept is needed.

Land Acquisition

How would an additional open space program resemble our present practice, and in what ways would it differ?

It would resemble present practice by designating and setting aside lands to provide open space, but it would differ in the means of securing the open areas. Two methods would be used in obtaining the additional green areas. One method would involve the acquisition of property rights in designated areas. In contrast to existing park programs that acquire land in fee, this program would acquire only certain public rights and assign all remaining rights to the property owner. The rights acquired by the public authorities would permit the prohibition of structures, and commercial, industrial, and nuisance uses. Thus the public agencies directing the program would be assured that the designated land would remain open, while the owner would be permitted to use it for agriculture and uses lacking structures.

The second method of assuring the retention of green areas in growing areas would revolve about the medium of tax concessions. For land designated to remain open, a contract between the owner and the public authorities involved would be drawn that would

include the following covenants: (a) the land under contract would remain green within determined standards for the duration of the contract period, (b) certain tax concessions would be granted the owner, and (c) the owner would agree to grant certain public rights to this land, such as hunting privileges, tempered, of course, by the regulations of such applicable agencies as state fish and game commissions. Such contracts might be developed on a term basis of five years, or they might be for longer periods and written to contain "relief and repayment clauses" for the land owner.

Uses of Open Spaces

The particular kinds of open spaces for which the program would be designed would include green belts to delimit the extent of urban development of existing communities and to delimit and define future residential areas. Broad green areas adjacent to future parkways in outlying suburban areas might also be established under the proposed open space program.

Consider, in addition to parkways and green belts, other desirable uses to which this program could be devoted. Three of these come to mind instantly: flood control, by devoting flood plain areas to open uses; water supply, by protecting water shed areas; and public aircraft insurance, by prohibiting areas close to airports from over development. Obviously, this list of potential uses can be supplemented.

The designation of the specific areas to be retained as open space would be the responsibility of county planning agencies acting in close collaboration with municipal planning boards. This would place the additional green areas program on an official basis within an echelon of local government capable of possessing regional views and executing regional actions.

Definitions would underlie the program. Agricultural interests would have to establish standards whereby "good farming land" could be legally identified. The rights of the public authorities and the rights of the land owners of the future "private or semiprivate green areas" would have to be carefully delineated. The use categories of the green areas would require both definition and differentiation. Similarly, the necessary contracts and their administrative execution would have to be spelled out, including terms of mandatory "permitted public uses."

Whether the state, counties, and municipalities purchase or condemn the necessary property rights, or whether counties and municipalities elect to grant certain tax concessions to obtain these rights, a green areas program of the nature outlined would be promoted best through the medium of state grants administered in cooperation with the counties affected or on a state-county, state-municipal basis. A grant program could vary according to the particular goals sought. It might be on a straight grant basis, for the creation of green areas next to parkways; on a matching grant basis for green belts, flood control measures, and water shed development; and on a fractional grant basis for airport protection.

Conclusions

The public is accustomed to and sanctions the expenditure of tax monies for several types of green areas: parks, playgrounds, recreational areas, forest reserves, game preserves, and hunting reservations. In response to this the planning fraternity has supplied itself with a pot of gay green paint that it daubs on plans and official maps to designate existing and potential areas which have been or are to be withdrawn from private use and the tax rolls. Our expanding population in this prosperous era, with ever-increasing amounts of leisure time and a steadily rising proportion of retired older people, has deluged government with demands for more parks and recreational space. At the same time, our population is fast becoming aware of the esthetic considerations in community building and rebuilding, the public's need for and appreciation of green areas becomes more apparent each year. I believe our population is able to understand and will advocate an advance in green area thinking when it considers what might be achieved.

Note: This article is a condensation of a talk titled "Needed: A Second Shade of Green". A copy of the full text may be obtained by addressing the author, Town Planning Board, Municipal Building, Montclair, New Jersey, and enclosing 12¢ in stamps.

The Nature Conservancy is an independent member-governed organization dedicated to saving America's heritage of wild nature. Its specific object is to preserve natural areas as "living museums" of the primeval wilderness. Such tracts are precious for their scientific, educational, and esthetic values. They also afford a home for the multitude of kinds of living things that would otherwise vanish from the earth, destroyed by our civilization.

The work of the organization began in 1917 under the direction of a committee of the Ecological Society of America. In 1946 the Ecologists Union was formed to take over these tasks. In 1950 its name was changed to the Nature Conservancy.

We, the members of the Nature Conservancy, invite you to join with us in this work. Membership is open to both individuals and organizations. Your contribution is an allowable income tax deduction.

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